

VETERANS JOURNAL



PUBLISHED BY
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Summer Issue 2001

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The information in this journal is being provided to make the veteran community aware of some current events, activities and veterans issues that are of mutual concern. From time to time, we will include some relevant information important enough to be repeated to insure that veterans and their families are aware of the full range of benefits and entitlements available to them.



PRICE RECEIVES MILVETS HERITAGE AWARD

(News Release from the Office of Congresswoman Deborah Pryce)
Columbus, Ohio – U.S. Representative Deborah Pryce (R-OH-15) received the Second Annual Military Veterans Educational Foundation (MILVETS) Heritage Award at the 2001 Armed Forces Day Luncheon in Columbus for her hard work and leadership on veterans issues.

"I am deeply honored and proud to have been chosen for this award", Pryce said. "America's veterans have made enormous sacrifices to defend our nation. Our citizens continue to enjoy the freedom and opportunities that our great country offers because of the

dedication and courage of the men and women who have served in our Armed Forces. For this reason, my priorities in Congress include making sure that veterans receive the high quality health care and other important benefits that they deserve."

Command Sgt Major Jake Brewer USA (Ret.), who presented Pryce with the award said, "Talking to Congresswoman Pryce about veterans issues, it's like preaching to the choir."

The MILVETS honored Pryce for her leadership on veterans issues both locally and nationally. Pryce was instrumental in obtaining approval for an historical marker for the site in downtown Columbus of the first meeting of what later became known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). She has also worked on many health care issues important to veterans including voting to maintain full funding for veterans' health care and benefits.

The five-term congresswoman has also introduced legislation to encourage schools to invite veterans into their classrooms each Veteran's Day and is also a co-sponsor of legislation to authorize disabled military retirees to receive both military retired pay and VA disability compensation concurrently.

The Military Veterans Educational Foundation (MILVETS) is a volunteer association founded to provide and coordinate support to veterans families, veterans, military, and the community by encouraging cooperation in promoting freedom, patriotism, education, and a strong national defense. Many of the Trustees and officers of MILVETS are Commanders at American Legions, VFW and AMVETS. In addition, the MILVETS seek to educate the community about veterans, national defense issues, and the history of American veterans.

FAMILY EDUCATION AT VA

(NAMI Franklin County
May 17, 2001)

The VA and NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) have teamed up to provide a Family Education Program for family members of veterans who have severe brain disorders (mental illnesses).

The program will be offered at the VA Clinic at Leonard and Taylor on Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 3:30 p.m. beginning September 5, 2001.

There is **NO CHARGE**. The program is **FREE** to family members.

The **NAMI Family-To-Family Education Program** is a 12-week course which discusses the clinical treatment of major mental illnesses and teaches the knowledge and skills that family members need to cope more effectively. The course is taught by trained family members and is provided at **no cost** to the participants.

The Family-To-Family Course Topics Include:

- 1) Learning about feelings, learning about facts.
- 2) Schizophrenia, major depression and mania: diagnosis and dealing with critical periods.
- 3) Subtypes of depression and bipolar disorder, panic disorder and OCD; diagnosis and causes; sharing our stories.
- 4) The biology of the brain/new research.
- 5) Problem solving workshop.
- 6) Medication review.

- 7) Empathy workshop – what it's like to have a brain disorder.
- 8) Communication skills workshop.
- 9) Self-care and relative groups.
- 10) Rehabilitation, services available.
- 11) Advocacy: fighting stigma.
- 12) Review and certification ceremony.

You must **register** in order to participate. For more information or to register, call NAMI Franklin county at **262-0114**.

The **NAMI Family-To-Family Education Program** will be available at other VA facilities around the state of Ohio: Akron, Brecksville, Chilicothe, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Wade Park, and Youngstown. For information regarding dates, times and location of classes contact **Suzanne Robinson at NAMI OHIO (800) 686-2646 or (614) 224-2700**.



FAMILY EDUCATION MOVING INTO VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

(by Brenda Johnson,
NAMI regional director
NAMI Franklin County
May 17, 2001)

These facts may surprise you. The Veterans Administration (VA) healthcare system has 172 hospitals, 650 outpatient clinics, 134 nursing home care units, 40 domiciliaries, and 206 Veterans Readjustment Counseling Centers. There are also 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs), each with the authority to implement programs in its region.

The VA treats nearly one million patients in its hospitals, 79,000 in its nursing homes, and 25,000 in its domiciliaries. An estimated 2.5 million veterans receive care annually, which represents a very large population who could benefit from all that NAMI

(National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) has to offer.

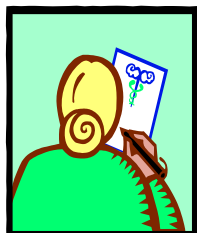
NAMI's Family-to-Family Education Program has proved to be a major benefit to families across America. Research has shown that this course gives families necessary facts about mental illnesses and empowers them to cope in a positive manner with family members who are mentally ill and with the mental health system.

These benefits have lasting effects in families dealing with illness most do not initially understand or know how to handle in terms of treatments and services. Throughout the nation, new leaders and strong advocates have come out of the Family-to-Family Program, a plus that could lead to great dividends for NAMI.

Various efforts are under way to implement family education in the VA healthcare system. NAMI, along with a national advisory group, has coordinated these efforts and is prepared to offer recommendations for the implementation. The guidelines that have been developed draw upon the experience of NAMI Ohio, the only group currently working with a VISN. A NAMI relationship with the VA creates many potential opportunities in addition to sharing Family-to-Family, such as participating on VA consumer councils and offering other NAMI programs to the VA population.

Collaboration among the various NAMI entities – such as NAMI's national office, state NAMIs, and the NAMI Veterans Committee – is seen as the key to success because all these groups have the same objective: providing education, support, and advocacy to families and caregivers of individuals with serious mental illnesses.

NAMI was recently awarded a grant for this project. We now have funding to start classes in 10 of the VA's 22 VISNs. The sites selected will need to demonstrate a clear collaboration among stakeholders as well as a commitment to adhere to the program's process, which has proved successful.



NON-VA EMERGENCY CARE SERVICES

Congress recently provided VA with new authority to pay for emergency care in non-VA facilities for veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. The new benefit will pay for emergency care rendered for nonservice-connected conditions for enrolled veterans who have no other source of payment for the care. Although the new authority was effective May 29, 2000, VA cannot process and pay claims until regulations are issued to implement the new law. VA expects to publish such regulations sometime in Fiscal Year 2002. VA is currently accepting claims for care rendered after May 29, 2000, but is holding them until regulations are published, at which time VA will evaluate the claims for payment.

HOW DO I QUALIFY?

This benefit is a safety net for enrolled veterans who have no other means of paying a private facility emergency bill. If another health insurance provider pays all or part of a bill, VA cannot provide any reimbursement. To qualify you must meet all of the following criteria:

- You were provided care in a hospital emergency department or similar facility providing emergency care
- You are enrolled in the VA Health Care System
- You have been provided care by a VA health care provider within the last 24 months
- You are financially liable to the provider of the emergency treatment for that treatment
- You have no other form of health care insurance

- You do not have coverage under Medicare, Medicaid, or a state program
- You do not have coverage under any other VA programs
- You have no other contractual or legal recourse against a third party that will pay all or part of the bill
- Department of Veterans Affairs or other federal facilities were not feasibly available at the time of the emergency
- The care must have been rendered in a medical emergency of such nature that a prudent layperson would have reasonably expected that delay in seeking immediate medical attention would have been hazardous to life or health

SHOULD I CANCEL MY CURRENT INSURANCE TO MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS?

If you are covered by a program or plan that would pay for the emergency care received, you would not qualify for this new benefit. However, VA encourages you to keep all current health insurance. Remember that spouses of veterans generally do not qualify for VA health care. If you cancel your current insurance, your spouse may not retain health insurance coverage. If you are covered by Medicare Part B and you decide to have it cancelled, it cannot be reinstated until January of the next year.

WHAT TYPE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES WILL VA COVER?

VA will reimburse health care providers for all medical services necessary to stabilize your condition up to the point you can be transferred to an approved VA health care facility.

DO I NEED TO GET APPROVAL BEFORE GOING TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM?

No. If you are an eligible veteran, a VA facility is not feasibly available, and you believe your health or life is in immediate danger, report directly to the closest emergency

room. You, your representative, or the treating facility should then contact the nearest VA as soon as possible (within 48 hours) to arrange a transfer to VA care, if hospitalization is required.

HOW LONG WILL I STAY IN THE PRIVATE HOSPITAL?

If you are hospitalized, VA will be in regular contact with your physician at the private hospital. As soon as your condition stabilizes, VA will arrange to transport you to a VA, or VA designated facility.

WHAT IF I DO NOT WISH TO LEAVE THE PRIVATE FACILITY?

VA will pay for your emergency care services only until your condition is stabilized. If you stay beyond that point, you will assume responsibility for the payment of costs associated with treatment.

WILL I HAVE TO PAY FOR TRANSPORTATION TO A VA DESIGNATED FACILITY?

No. If you need continued care, VA will pay for or arrange your transportation.

WHAT IF THE HOSPITAL BILLS ME FOR SERVICES?

If you are billed for emergency care services, contact your local VA health care facility and a representative will assist you in resolving the issue.

WHAT IF MY CLAIM IS DENIED?

To resolve claims issues, VA has established official appeals processes to make sure your case is thoroughly reviewed. Please see your local VA health care facility for current procedures.

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**VFW
RUNS
OUT OF**

KOREAN WAR MEDALS

VFW is no longer distributing the *Korea War Service Medal*. Demand from eligible VFW members for the award far surpassed the original allotment of 2,000. VFW national headquarters staff members who handled disbursement of the award estimated that they received nearly 16,000 requests.

Since July, staff members have been returning paperwork to those members who sent in requests based on an announcement of the medal's availability in the June/July 2000 "Washington Wire". It is now available free.

Vets who want the medal may request it from the Air Force through November 2003. To qualify, they must have served on or over the Korean peninsula, or in waters adjacent to it, at some point from June 25, 1950, to July 27, 1953. As proof of their service, they should send copies of their DD-214, DD-215, National Guard Form 22, special orders assigning them to or from the area of eligibility, temporary duty orders or a completed travel voucher, or special orders or citations for awards granted by virtue of service in the area of eligibility.

The Pentagon stresses that the documents must be accompanied by a signed cover letter requesting the Korea War Service Medal and an address to return the medal. Send to HQ AFPC/DPPPRK, 550 C ST, W., STE 12, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4714.

For more information, contact the Air Force Personnel Center at (800) 558-1404 or www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/awards.



JUST A DREAM

Several months ago, I went to see "Saving Private Ryan" for the first time, I left shortly after it started. Having been there on D-Day left me with too many sad memories.

It was a little after midnight when I arrived home and laid down to rest. Could I have had a nightmare, a dream, or had I just been thinking that I was back in Europe?

In my dream I took my little grandson with me and visited the places I had been several years ago - Omaha Beach, Brest, St. Lo, Achen, and Buchenwald concentration camp, where the crematory still seemed warm.

Then all of the sudden we were standing in the fields of little white crosses, and as we walked along, I knelt down and wiped the dust off the face of the cross so the name would be more legible to my eyes. My grandson said, "who's that?". I said, "A friend of mine", and we kept walking among the crosses. I knelt down again and my grandson said, "who's that?". I said another friend of mine", and as I looked out over all the fields, I remembered our last breakfast together. The General had come in and said, "I want you to look at the one on your left and the one on your right. After today you may never see them again". Subconsciously, was I looking for the names of the ones on my right and my left?

My grandson started running. I couldn't keep up, time had taken over my youth and I ran very slowly. When I looked up I saw a large cross. It was so large that it's

shadow covered all the little crosses in the fields like a sunset in the evening, and then I saw my grandson wiping the dust off the face of the cross. He could not find a name. He was disturbed. But when he looked up, he was filled with great excitement and yelled, "who's that?" so loud that it echoed through the fields - "who's that? Who's that?"

I took him by the hand and we sat down at the foot of the cross and I talked to him about Jesus, how he gave his life for us upon the cross but there was no grave that could hold him. On the third day He arose to be with His heavenly Father. Now you can see the difference. Jesus does not lie beneath the cross. Those who are beneath the little crosses made it possible for you and me to enjoy this day together. You see, they have given us an earthly freedom, where Jesus has given us an eternal freedom.

If I could fulfill my dream, it would be to return to Europe. Maybe I could find the names of my friends that were on my left and on my right that breakfast morning.

Marion Gray

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VA'S CEMETERY SYSTEM

WHAT'S NEW IN BENEFITS?

Here are some valuable facts and figures for veterans interested in burial benefits and eligibility requirements.

(VFW – May 2001 by Tim Dyhouse)

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR BURIAL IN A VA CEMETERY

- ~ Served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces.
- ~ Discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.
- ~ A spouse, unremarried widow or widower, minor child or, under certain conditions, an unmarried adult child of an eligible servicemember or veteran.
- ~ Reservists who die while on active duty or who have 20 years service in the Reserves and are creditable for retired pay may also be eligible.
- ~ National Guardsmen who are killed while on active-duty or while traveling to or from a drill.

BENEFITS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE ELIGIBLE

- ~ The right to be buried with one's peers.
- ~ A gravesite in any VA national cemetery with available space.
- ~ The opening and closing of the grave.
- ~ Headstone or marker.
- ~ A burial flag.
- ~ A grave liner.
- ~ A Presidential Memorial Certificate.
- ~ A \$1,500 burial allowance if the veteran's death was service-connected and \$300 for disabled veterans who were receiving compensation from VA at the time of their death.
- ~ Perpetual maintenance of the gravesite.

~ NCA does not provide burial at sea. For that service, veterans must contact the Department of the Navy.

HEADSTONES AND MARKERS

- ~ Provided at no cost for the unmarked graves of veterans in private and government cemeteries around the world.
- ~ Available for eligible dependents of veterans buried in national, post or state veterans cemeteries.
- ~ Available in flat bronze, flat granite, flat marble, upright marble and upright granite.
- ~ Inscribed with the name of the deceased, the dates of birth and death and branch of service.
- ~ Inscribed with other approved optional text at government expense if space allows.
- ~ Available to mark spaces in walls (columbaries) used to hold cremated remains.
- ~ If a veteran wants to be buried in a private cemetery with a VA-provided headstone, the family must complete *VA Form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker for Installation in a Private or State Veterans' Cemetery*. Only an eligible veteran may receive it. Spouses and dependent children are not eligible for such a marker at a private cemetery.

PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES

- ~ Inscribed with the veteran's name and the President's signature.
- ~ Provided to the veteran's next-of-kin or loved ones.

BURIAL FLAGS

- ~ Used to drape the casket.
- ~ Given to next-of-kin after the service.
- ~ May be donated to a national cemetery for the Avenue of Flags program. (Most national VA cemeteries display an Avenue of Flags on patriotic holiday and during special events. VA presents certificates of appreciation to donors of burial flags.)

MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS

- ~ Provided under the pentagon's "Honoring Those Who Served" program.

~ Veterans service organizations may assist with the honors.

~ Cemetery staff may help coordinate the honors service.

ARRANGING A BURIAL

- ~ A veteran's next-of-kin or the family's funeral director may make arrangements with a national cemetery.
- ~ Provide cemetery staff with copy of veteran's properly signed discharge papers, or the veteran's service, Social Security and VA claim numbers.

STATE CEMETERIES

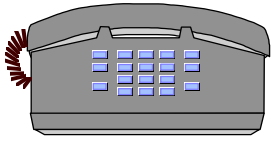
Veterans may be buried in state cemeteries – with all benefits accorded at national cemeteries – in areas where national cemeteries "cannot fully satisfy veterans' burial needs." The veteran's family receives a \$150 burial allowance in this situation.

AVAILABLE SPACE CEMETERIES

Every state except Idaho has either open state cemeteries. Of these, 39 have open *national* cemeteries. The other 10 states have open *state* cemeteries. NCA suggests that if a cemetery is not available in a specific state, veterans should consider cremation (columbaries are usually available) or choose another cemetery.

"Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools because they have to say something."

Plato



TELEPHONE SCAMS

(AT&T Worldnet Service Message Center, Fri May 11, 2001)

Unfortunately, area code changes are providing scam artists opportunities to practice their trade. One of the older scams worth cautioning you about is the infamous offshore area code "809", which over time most people have learned not to dial. It appears that 809 is breaking up into smaller chunks using area codes such as: 242, 246, 264, 268, 284, 345, 441, 473, 664, 758, 767, 784, 787, 868, 869, 876, as well as 809.

The scam works this way. You find a message on your answering machine asking you to call a number beginning with Area Code 809 to get information about something such as a - -

- *Family member who has taken ill;
- *Family member who has been arrested;
- *Family member who has died; or,
- *Wonderful prize you may have won.

In any event, concerned or curious, you make the call. Whether the person on the other end has trouble understanding you, explaining the situations, or you get a very long recorded message, the real purpose is to keep you on the line as long as possible to build up charges. When your phone bill arrives, you see an incredible charge, oftentimes several \$100s of dollars.

By using area code 809 and other offshore numbers as "pay-per-calls", scam artists get around US Regulations and 900 number blocking and warning requirements about the charge. Consequently, every call results in the scam artist getting a greatly inflated rebate from the foreign phone company. Similar scam calls are also being placed on pagers.

Scams of this type are extremely hard to prosecute. Since you placed the call, neither your local

phone company nor your long distance carrier will want to get involved. They'll tell you that they are simply providing the billing for the foreign company. You end up trying to deal, over the phone, with a foreign company that feels they have done no wrong. It can turn into a real nightmare.

According to the National Fraud Information Center to distinguish a valid call from a bogus one, follow this rule of thumb. Creditors provide toll-free numbers in order to encourage their customers to return the call. I you know that you're not in debt, don't bother returning a message that says you are, especially if a toll-free callback number is not provided.

Also, don't respond to messages that promise a prize or gift if you call back. Even if they aren't a pay-per-call scam, they may be a sweepstakes or prize offer scam.

The best advice is to be cautious and avoid calling numbers you don't recognize. If you have any questions check with your telephone company before placing a call to an unfamiliar area code.

FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH!!

A few years ago, at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants, all physically or mentally disabled, assembled at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. At the gun, they all started out, not exactly in a dash, but with a relish to run the race to the finish and win.

All, that is, except one little boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times, and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy cried. They slowed down and looked back. Then they all turned around and went back...every single one of them.

One girl with Down's Syndrome bent down and kissed him and said, "This will make it better." Than all nine linked arms and walked together to the finish line.

Everyone in the stadium stood, and the cheering went on for several minutes. People who were there are still telling the story. Why?

Because deep down we know this one thing: What matters in this life is more than winning for ourselves. What matters in this life is helping others win, even if it means slowing down and changing our course.



JUBILEE OF LIBERTY MEDAL IS AVAILABLE

(Columbus, Ohio)

Franklin County Veterans Service Commission is pleased to announce the offer of the "Jubilee of Liberty (jubilee De La Liberte) Medal.

The Franklin County Veterans Service Commission in conjunction with the Congressional Offices of Deborah Pryce and Pat Tiberi are making this Medal available to all World War II veterans of the Normandy Invasion or their families (one medal per veteran).

If you or a family member would like to apply you must be a current resident of Franklin County and provide one of the following documents:

- ☞ Separation paper that has either Normandy or Northern France as the Campaign.

- ☞ Separation Paper that has Eastern Theatre of Operations (ETO) between June 5, 1944 and August 31, 1944.

- ☞ A Report of casualty for the above dates.

The cut off date to order the medal is October 15, 2001 at no cost. After this date you will need to purchase the medal on your own.

To receive applications call the Veterans Service Commission at (614) 462-2500 and ask to speak to Veterans Service Officer Thomas Heston.

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WHAT TO DO IF YOU LOSE YOUR PURSE OR WALLET

(By Denise Murphy
AT&T Worldnet Service
Friday, May 11, 2001)

We have all heard horror stories about fraud that's committed using your name, address, SS#, credit, etc. Unfortunately I (the author of this piece) have firsthand knowledge, because my wallet was stolen last month and within a week the thief(s) ordered an expensive monthly cell phone package, applied for a VISA credit card, had a credit line approved to buy a Gateway Computer, received a PIN number from the Department of Motor Vehicles to change my driving record information online, and more.

But here's some critical information to limit the damage in case this happens to you or someone you know.

As everyone always advises, cancel your credit cards immediately, but the key is having the toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know who to call. Keep those where you can find them easily (having to hunt for them is additional stress you WON'T need at that point!). On a personal note, I remember losing a MC and until I got the toll free number from information, etc., I was a wreck.

File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where it was stolen, this proves to credit providers you were diligent, and is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one).

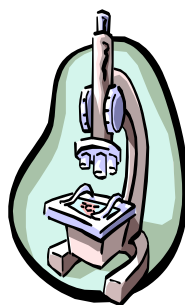
But here's what is perhaps most important: I never ever thought to

do this. Call the three national credit –reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and Social Security Number. I had never heard of doing that until advised by a bank that called to tell me an application for credit was made over the Internet in my name. The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit.

By the time I was advised to do this – almost 2 weeks after the theft, all the damage had been done (there are records of all the credit checks initiated by the thieves' purchases, none of which I knew about before placing the alert). Since then, no additional damage has been done, and the thieves threw my wallet away this weekend (someone turned it in).

It seems to have stopped them in their tracks. The numbers for the credit reporting agencies are:

Equifax.....1-800-525-6285
Experian
(formerly TRW)...1-800-301-7195
Trans Union.....1-800-680-7289
Social Security Administration
fraud line.....1-800-269-0271



BIRTH DEFECTS – LEUKEMIA

(By Dave Barker,
AMVETS State 50)

In the fastest action of the ongoing Agent Orange saga, the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs has prepared legislation, regarding leukemia in children of Agent Orange exposed veterans. The newest report from the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine (NAS) reported limited/suggestive evidence of association between exposure to herbicides containing

TCDD and acute myelogenous leukemia. Secretary of the Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi made the decision quickly; thus, firmly placing himself as *the* leader in taking proper action for the Vietnam veteran and their offspring.

Several years have passed since the NAS reports indicated multiple birth defects were suggestive of the exposure to herbicides containing dioxin. It has been a seemingly painful wait from the announcements of the NAS and VA decisions, in which these process' commenced in March 1994. This was very quick action on the part of Mr. Principi, a Navy veteran of the Vietnam war. In his first three months we have a major breakthrough in the three decades *plus* struggle of exposed veterans and their offspring.

Hopefully the Vietnam veterans and their children will have other major birth defects addressed soon. The issue of Cerebral Palsy shows a high rate of incidence when compared to the issues of Spina Bifida, the first birth defect approved by the VA, as well as the current acceptance of the acute myelogenous leukemia condition. The chairman of the committee, Professor Irva Hertz-Picciotto remarked "no firm evidence links exposure to the herbicides with most childhood cancers; but new research does suggest that some kind of connection exists between acute myelogenous leukemia in children and their military service in Vietnam or Cambodia." We should remember Agent Orange was a defoliant for removing cover of the enemy and was used in the DMZ in Korea as well. The professor's remarks concerning Cambodia may be an overstatement

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BIRTH DEFECTS – LEUKEMIA (Con't)

as the VA has not given blanket recognition to uses in Cambodia. The VA has granted claims based on exposure to veterans stationed on the Korean DMZ in 1968-69.

This cancer recognized by the secretary is a very rare form of leukemia and is usually fatal. Agent Orange was last used in major applications in Vietnam in 1971.

AGENT ORANGE HELPLINE ESTABLISHED

**(Uniformed Services Journal,
May/June 2001)**

Vietnam veterans now have a new national toll-free helpline to answer their questions about Agent Orange exposure, health care and benefits.

The new helpline: **1-800-749-8387** is part of the continuing efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reach America's 2.3 million Vietnam veterans.

Callers can speak directly to VA representatives Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Central Standard Time, or access a 24-hour automated system. Voice mail messages can be left to have information sent, or callers can listen to recordings about Agent Orange exposure, VA benefits, health care and disability compensation.

The helpline is located at the St. Louis VA Regional Office, which has a similar toll-free helpline for Gulf War veterans. The two helplines will share the same telephone number, with callers selecting the service they wish.



VA INSURANCE HOAX

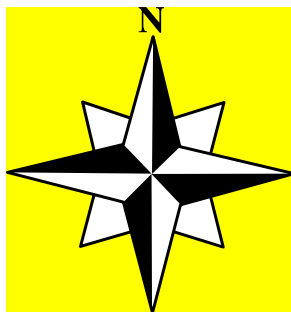
**(Uniformed Services Journal,
May/June 2001)**

The VA Office of Inspector General (VAOIG) requests assistance in attempting to put an end to an insurance hoax that has plagued the VA for many years. Veterans are being told by fliers or articles to apply for SGLI dividends. The fliers did not originate with the VA and do not reflect VA policies. The VA does not pay dividends on SGLI policies. Dividend payments are automatic to those veterans who have participating VA policies that pay dividends and who continue to pay premiums. The dividend is usually paid on the anniversary date of the policy, and no application is needed. Some recent versions of the hoax have included offers to assist the veteran in obtaining the "dividend" for a small fee. Do not give any money to individuals who make this offer to you. If you are approached with such an offer, you should immediately report it to the VAOIG, providing all available identifying information (such as name, address, and telephone number) on the individual. The VAOIG Hotline Address & Phone Number are:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Inspector General Hotline (53E)
P.O. Box 50410
Washington, D.C. 20091-0410
E-Mail:

vaoig.hotline@forum.va.gov

Phone: 1-800-488-VAIG (8244)



COLUMBUS HEALTH CLINICS

(Columbus Dispatch)

These low-cost clinics are operated by the Columbus Health Department, 181 Washington Blvd:

..Sexual Health Clinic
..Ben Franklin Tuberculosis Clinic
..Alcohol and Drug Use Program
..Women, Infant and Children Program
..Community Dental Program
..Physicians Free Clinic is operated by the Columbus Medical Association but has walk-in services at the Columbus Health Department.

OTHER LOCATIONS:

..Sexual Health Awareness Clinic 1555 Bryden Rd
..Immunization Clinics
John R. Maloney South Side Health Center
1833 Parsons Ave
Barnett Recreation Center
1184 Barnett Rd.
Hilltop Health Center
2500 Sullivant Ave.
Northside WIC
1120 Morse Road
Worthington United Methodist Church
600 No. High St.
..Prenatal Programs
Bryden House
1555 Bryden Rd.
Sullivant Gardens
755 Renick St.

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LOW COST CARE

(Columbus Dispatch)

The eight Columbus Neighborhood Health Centers have had a surge in patients since Columbus Community Hospital closed May 25. Here are the locations of clinics and the number of patients served:

(1999 / 2000)

1. **Billie Brown Jones Health Center (6673/7304)**
1060 Mount Vernon Ave.
2. **East Central Health Center (5439/8970)**
1166 East Main Street
3. **Franklinton Health Center (6227/6018)**
199 South Central Ave.
4. **Hilltop Health Center (5501/6814)**
2500 Sullivant Ave.
5. **John R. Maloney South Side Health Center (5964/6804)**
1833 Parsons Ave.
6. **St. Mark's Health Center (6934/7424)**
1260 North High Street
7. **St. Stephen's Health Center (4498/5263)**
1500 East 17th Ave.
- 8) **Columbus Northeast Health Center (Opened in 2001)**



PHARMACY UPDATE

Did you know that there are three ways to get your prescription medication through TRICARE? Military pharmacies, TRICARE network pharmacies, and the National Mail Order Pharmacy program are all available for you. National Mail Order Pharmacy phone numbers are:
1-800-903-4680 (under age 65)
1-877-DOD-MEDS (over age 65)

STILL SMOKING?

If you stopped smoking today, your chances of having a heart attack would decrease within one day, be cut in half after one year, and be near the chances for a person who never smoked at all after only two years! Call your

TRICARE Service Center or visit your nearest military hospital for details on smoking cessation classes.



DENTAL PROGRAMS

The TRICARE Family Member Dental Plan is available worldwide, at about 1/3 the cost of a standard commercial dental program. Call 1-800-866-8499 for details. The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program is now available for retirees. Their phone number is 1-888-336-3260.

OFDA Legislative Update

(Ohio Funeral Directors Association)

Prepared by John T. McGough,
McGough & Associates

STATE ABOLISHES INDIGENT BURIAL PROGRAM

Effective July 1, 2001, the state's indigent burial program will be abolished. This program had paid funeral directors up to \$750 per indigent burial. Abolishment of this program was the result of passage of the state budget which will fund state operations from July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2003. Due to a slowing economy and the Ohio Supreme Court's mandate to adequately fund education, many state programs were severely cut or abolished.

As a result of the abolishment of this program, Ohio law (revised code section 5101.521) now requires municipalities and townships to shoulder this burden. The township or municipality is required to bury or cremate the deceased indigent at its expense. A

stone or concrete marker on which the person's name, age and date of death shall be inscribed. In the coming months, the OFDA will be meeting with representatives of the Ohio Municipal League and the Ohio Township Association to discuss their role in implementing the provisions relating to indigent burials.

ATTENTION

ALL RETIRED MILITARY PERSONNEL

INFORMATION SEMINAR

A speaker from Humana, the coordinator for TRICARE benefits, will be at the Defense Supply Columbus Center (DSCC), Building 20 on Saturday, September 29, 2001 at 10:00 am. The speaker will be available to answer you questions and concerns.

There will also be a speaker giving a presentation on space available travel.

You must have your Military ID Card with you. Spouses are welcome to come along.